

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

JANUARY 2008

RHODE ISLAND COUNTY FSA

Attention Phone system Changes!

The USDA Service Center in Warwick, RI has recently upgraded to a new phone system. All calls to the Service Center are now being answered by an auto attendant. To shortcut the opening announcement you may immediately select the following options listed below:

Option 2-FSA County Office Staff:

Melissa Turrisi, CED/ Anne Belleville, PT/ Devon Marsden, PT/ Leila Naylor, PT.

Option 9-FSA Farm Loan Office Staff:

Roxanne Boisse, FLM/ Joe Marcoccia, FLO/ Sandy Ford, PT

Option 1-FSA State Office Staff:

Robert Swanson, SED/ Frank Bouchard, DD/ Deborah Lebrun, AS/ Alison Rose, AS.



County Committee Elections 2008

Thanks to all who participated in the elections this year. County Committee meetings are held monthly. Newly-elected members and alternates take office January 1, 2008. The new committee members will hold their organizational meeting on January 9th to determine who will serve as the County Committee chairman and vice-chairman. County Committee members are a critical component to the day-to-day operations of FSA and help deliver FSA programs at the local level.

Results from the Election held December 5, 2007 are as follows:

LAA #2-Coventry, East Greenwich, West Greenwich, Warwick, West Warwick, Greene

Vincent Confreda – Member
John T Leyden– First Alternate
Alice Westervelt – Second Alternate
Gilbert Rathbun-Third Alternate

LAA #4-Jamestown, Newport, Portsmouth, Middletown

Victor Hoogendoorn – Member
Louis Escobar – First Alternate

LAA #5-Barrington, Bristol, Warren, Tiverton, Little Compton

George Goulart Jr-Member

County Office Staff

Melissa Turrisi-CED
Anne Belleville-PT
Devon Marsden-PT
Leila Naylor-PT

Farm Loan Staff

Roxanne Boisse-FLM
Joe Marcoccia-FLO
Sandy Ford-PT

Office Hours **Monday-Friday** **8:30AM-4:30PM** **Phone Number**



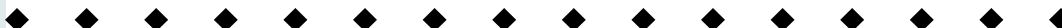
401-828-3120 or
Toll Free:
1-800-551-5144
Fax Number
401-821-0780

60 Quaker Lane
Suite 49
Warwick, RI 02886

Dates to Remember

January 9th
COC Meeting

January 21st
Martin Luther King
Office is Closed



Dairy Disaster Assistance Program

Eligible dairy producers can sign up for the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP-III) at local FSA service centers beginning **Dec. 3, 2007**. DDAP-III will help dairy producers production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions in the last few years. The program provides \$16 million in benefits to dairy producers for production losses that occurred between Jan. 1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007, because of qualifying natural disasters. It compensates producers for production losses that resulted from lost herds or dumped milk when dairy plants closed or the natural disaster damaged containment equipment. Additionally, power outages, fuel shortages, and infrastructure damage may have temporarily interrupted the flow of dairy products to markets. To find out more information or to apply for the program, contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA County Office.

Farm Loan Program Rules Streamlined

FSA's Farm Loan Programs will be modernized Jan. 1, 2008, to make it easier for farmers, ranchers and producers to apply for loans. Over the past few years FSA has streamlined areas of its farm loan programs, such as the Guaranteed and Emergency Loan Programs, by revising loan making and servicing requirements and procedures to better serve applicants and borrowers. **Direct Loans Programs streamlining includes:**

Reducing the number of pages in the Code of Federal Regulations necessary to administer the Farm Loan Programs by more than 80 percent; *Modifying* requirements to more closely conform to those used by other lenders; *Ensuring* all forms are available on-line; *Cutting* nearly in half the number of forms required; and

Making guidance more manageable by replacing nearly 40 instruction manuals with six handbooks.

The program rules and forms will officially change on Dec. 31, 2007. This will allow employees time for nationwide training on the new forms and rules. Until then, FSA will follow current procedures. The streamlining rule can be viewed via the *Federal Register* at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frcont07.html.

More information about streamlining can be found at the county office or online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>; click on "Farm Loan Programs" for more information.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed. Contact your local FSA farm loan manager or officer for more details and assistance in applying.

USDA Works to Protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

USDA has formally launched a Department-wide campaign to make certain that producers' "Personally Identifiable Information" or PII, is being protected. The PII generally refers to information which is maintained by a USDA agency about an individual, including USDA customers and USDA employees. Information may include details of financial transactions between a customer and the Department; such unique information as a Social Security number and a date or place of birth which could be used to trace an individual's identity; and other personal information, including medical or criminal history, which is linkable to a particular individual.

As part of USDA's official policy on social security numbers, USDA will collect, use, maintain, and/or disseminate Social Security numbers only when required by statute or when specifically authorized to do so. USDA agencies will not use the number as an identity number. Agencies must mask or encrypt Social Security numbers so that they cannot be viewed on computer screens, reports, or other products. Agencies will not use Social Security numbers to access customer records.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division

Ag Census Forms Due Feb 4th

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) began distribution of the 2007 Census of Agriculture last month and completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. According to NASS, the Census of Agriculture provides information that is not available elsewhere. The last Ag Census was conducted in 2002.

The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation.

Policy-makers use Census data for decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. Community planners use Census information to target delivery of local services. Companies rely on Census data when determining where to locate their operations. And farmers themselves look at Census data when deciding to make changes in their production strategies.



Join USDA for an Informational Meeting on Renewable Energy

USDA will be holding an informational meeting to discuss USDA's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program. This meeting will be held at the Warwick Service Center located at 60 Quaker Lane Suite 44, Warwick, RI on Wednesday, January 23, 2008 from 10:00 to 12:00 am.

The meeting will include a general overview of the program, eligibility requirements, site requirements and program guidelines will be discussed. Application procedures and contents will be reviewed and a sample template will be provided.

There will be a subsequent session which will include an application workshop for rural farm producers and rural business owners to apply for assistance through this program.

Please RSVP by January 16, 2008 if you are interested in attending and to inquire if you are located in an eligible rural area. This can be accomplished by calling the Warwick Service Center at 401-826-0842 x 301, or by emailing Pamela.Miller@ri.usda.gov.



Money Available for Creative Conservation Farming in Rhode Island

The RI Office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces a request for proposals for 2008 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). Grants of up to \$75,000 are available to fund creative ideas and practices that will conserve soil, water and energy resources or improve air quality, grazing land and forest health in Rhode Island. Funding for CIG is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). All proposed CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers (farmers who gross \$1,000 or more annually). Technologies and approaches that are commonly used in RI, and which are eligible for funding through EQIP, are not eligible for funding through CIG. Government or non-government organizations or individuals, including federally-recognized tribes are eligible for funding.

Three grant application workshops will be held:

Northern Rhode Island – Tuesday, January 15, 2008, 7 PM, Northern RI Conservation District Office, 17 Smith Avenue, Greenville. Call (401) 949-1480 for more information.

Southern Rhode Island – Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 7 PM, USDA Conference Room in Warwick, 60 Quaker Lane, 2nd Floor. Call (401) 284-1885 for more information

Eastern Rhode Island – Thursday, January 17, 2008, 7 PM, Eastern RI Conservation District Office, 2490 Main Road, Tiverton. Call (401) 624-7490 for more information.

These workshops will help potential applicants understand the components of the grant programs, plan and budget potential projects, complete the application form, and learn about the grant review, award, and implementation process. We strongly suggest that you attend. Applications will be available at the workshops.



January 2008 Newsletter

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Mailed from Zip Code 02893

PRSR STD
US Postage Paid
Permit #2



USDA - Farm Service Agency
Rhode Island County Office
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 49
Warwick, RI 02886